

Lesson 27. Neighborhood Watch

Lesson Purpose

To provide an introductory overview of the value of Neighborhood Watch and how to start one.

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Identify reasons for having a Neighborhood Watch.
- Describe steps in organizing a Neighborhood Watch.
- List key sources of information to support a Neighborhood Watch program.

Materials

Presentation: Neighborhood Watch

Handout(s): *"Take a Stand Against Crime: Join a Neighborhood Watch"*
"Starting a Neighborhood Watch"

Supplement: Publications available from NCPC, including --
"A Checklist for Starting a Neighborhood Watch"
"Neighborhood Watch: Make It a Permanent Force for Community Betterment"
"Neighborhood Watch Organizer's Guide"
"Taking Back Your Neighborhood"
"Graffiti is Everybody's Problem"

Display copies of newspaper and magazine articles about Neighborhood Watch activities.

Related Resources

National Crime Prevention Council, www.ncpc.org

Lesson Plan

Time	Main Points	Slide
Introduction		
5 min.	Neighborhood Watch, Block Watch, Town Watch, Building Watch, Crime Watch— whatever the name, it's one of the most effective and least costly ways to prevent crime and reduce fear. Neighborhood Watch fights the isolation that crime both creates and feeds upon. It forges bonds among area residents, helps reduce burglaries and robberies, and improves relations between local law enforcement officers and the communities they serve.	1 – 2
	Briefly describe local examples of how Neighborhood Watch has been beneficial.	

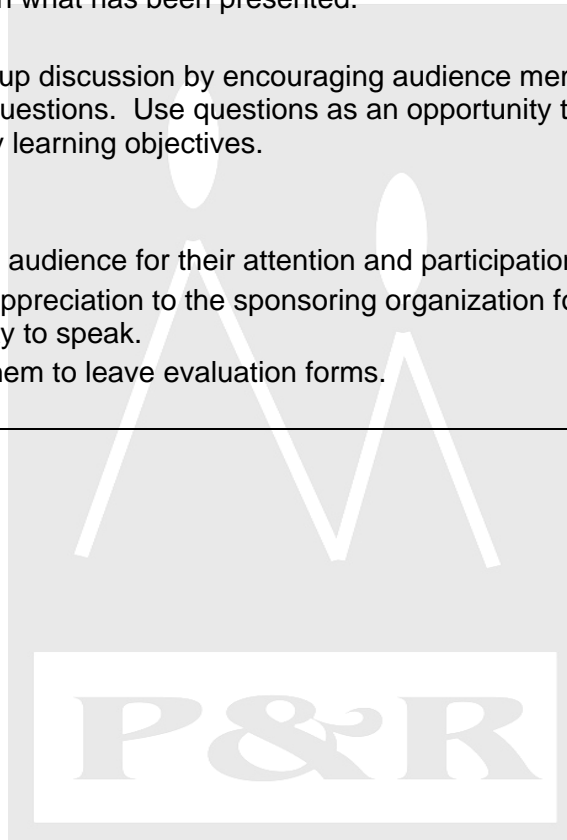
Time	Main Points	Slide
	Today, we'll talk about reasons for having a Neighborhood Watch, and review steps to organize a Neighborhood Watch.	2
	Distribute handouts: <i>"Take a Stand Against Crime: Join a Neighborhood Watch"</i> and <i>"Starting a Neighborhood Watch"</i>	
Presentation		
2 min.	WHY NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It works. Throughout the country, dramatic decreases in burglary and related offenses are reported by law enforcement professionals in communities with active Watch programs. ▪ Today's transient society produces communities that are less personal. Many families have two working parents, and children involved in many activities that keep them away from home. An empty house in a neighborhood where none of the neighbors know the owner is a prime target for burglary. ▪ Neighborhood Watch also helps build pride and serves as a springboard for efforts that address other community concerns, such as recreation for youth, child care and affordable housing. 	3
1 min.	WHO CAN BE INVOLVED? <p>Any community resident can join—young or old, single or married, renter or homeowner. Even the busiest of people can belong to a Neighborhood Watch—they, too, can keep an eye-out for neighbors as they come and go.</p> <p>Watch Groups can be formed around any geographical unit: a block, apartment building, townhouse complex, park, business area, public housing complex, office building or marina.</p>	4
3 min.	WHAT DOES A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH DO? <p>A Neighborhood Watch consists of neighbors helping neighbors. They are extra eyes and ears for reporting crime and helping neighbors. Members meet their neighbors, learn how to make their homes more secure, watch out for each other and the neighborhood and report activity that raises their suspicions to the police or sheriff's office.</p>	5

Time	Main Points	Slide
8 min.	HOW DOES A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH START? A motivated individual, a few concerned residents, a community organization or a law enforcement agency can spearhead the effort to establish a Watch. Together they can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize a small planning committee of neighbors to discuss needs, the level of interest and possible community problems. Contact the local police or sheriff's department, or local crime prevention organization, for help in training members in home security, developing reporting skills and obtaining information on local crime patterns. Hold an initial meeting to gauge neighbors' interest; establish the purpose of the program, and begin to identify issues that need to be addressed. Select a coordinator. 	6
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for block captain volunteers who are responsible for relaying information to members. Recruit members, keeping up-to-date information on new residents and making special efforts to involve the elderly, working parents and young people. Work with local government, or law enforcement, to put up Neighborhood Watch signs, usually after at least 50 percent of all households are enrolled. 	7
5 min.	MAJOR COMPONENTS OF A WATCH PROGRAM? Community meetings. These should be conducted on a regular basis, such as bi-monthly, monthly or six times per year. Citizens' or community patrol. A citizens' patrol is made up of volunteers who walk or drive through the community and alert police to crime and questionable activities. Not all Neighborhood Watches need a citizens' patrol. Communications. These can be as simple as a weekly flier posted on community announcement boards, or as formal as a newsletter that updates neighbors on the progress of the program, or a neighborhood electronic bulletin board. Special events. These are crucial to keep the program going and growing. Host talks or seminars that focus on current issues, such as hate or bias-motivated violence, crime in schools, teenage alcohol and other drug abuse, or domestic violence. Adopt a park or school playground, and paint over graffiti. Sponsor a block party, holiday dinner or recreational activity that will provide neighbors a chance to get to know each other. Other aspects of community safety. For instance, start a block parent program to help children in emergency situations.	8

Time	Main Points	Slide
2 min.	RESPONSIBILITIES AS A WATCH MEMBER? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be alert! ▪ Know your neighbors and watch out for each other. ▪ Report suspicious activities and crimes to the police or sheriffs' department. ▪ Learn how you can make yourself and your community safer. 	9
2 min.	WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES SHOULD I BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR AS A WATCH MEMBER? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Someone screaming or shouting for help. ▪ Someone looking in windows of houses and parked cars. ▪ Property being taken from closed businesses or out of houses where no one is at home. ▪ Cars, vans or trucks moving slowly with no apparent destination, or with lights turned off. 	10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anyone being forced into a vehicle. ▪ A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child. ▪ Report these incidents to the police or sheriffs' department. Talk about concerns and problems with your neighbors. 	11
1 min.	HOW SHOULD I REPORT THESE INCIDENTS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number. ▪ Give your name and address. ▪ Explain what happened. ▪ Briefly describe the suspect: sex and race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing and distinctive characteristics, such as a beard, mustache, scars or an accent. ▪ Describe the vehicle if one was involved: color, make, model, year, license plate and special features such as stickers. 	11
4 min.	TIPS FOR SUCCESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hold regular meetings to help residents get to know each other, and to collectively decide upon program strategies and activities. ▪ Consider linking with an existing organization, such as a citizens' association, community development office, tenants' association or housing authority. ▪ Canvas door-to-door to recruit members. ▪ Involve everyone -- young and old, single and married, renter and homeowner. ▪ Gain support from the police or sheriffs' office. This is critical to a Watch group's credibility. These agencies are the major sources of information on local crime patterns, home security, other crime prevention education and crime reporting. ▪ Get the information out quickly. Share all kinds of news – dispel rumors. 	12

Time	Main Points	Slide
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gather the facts about crime in your neighborhood. Check police reports, do victimization surveys and learn residents' perceptions about crime. Often residents' opinions are not supported by facts. Accurate information can reduce the fear of crime. ▪ Physical conditions, like abandoned cars or overgrown vacant lots, contribute to crime. Sponsor cleanups, encourage residents to beautify the area and ask them to turn on outdoor lights at night. ▪ It's essential to celebrate the success of the effort and recognize volunteers' contributions through such events as awards, annual dinners and parties. To help meet community needs, Neighborhood Watches can sponsor meetings that address broader issues, such as drug abuse, gangs, self-protection tactics, isolation of the elderly, crime in the schools and rape prevention. ▪ Don't forget events like National Night Out, or a potluck dinner, that give neighbors a chance to get together. Such items as pins, tee-shirts, hats or coffee mugs with the group's name also enhance identity and pride. 	13
2 min.	Summarizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reasons to start a Neighborhood Watch. ▪ How to get started. ▪ Types of Watch activities. ▪ Tips for success 	14
Practice/feedback		
10 min	Ask participants to form small groups of 4 or 5 and, reviewing information from their handouts, identify "next steps" they would be interested in taking to form a Neighborhood Watch. Allow 6 to 8 minutes for small group discussion. Then ask each group to report briefly on "next steps" they identified.	

Time	Main Points	Slide
Evaluation		
10 min.	<p>Set-up</p> <p>We have a few minutes for questions and additional discussion. While we're doing that, we have a brief evaluation form we'd like for you to complete and leave with us. Your name is not required, but your feedback is very important. It will help us improve our presentation and program.</p> <p>Distribute evaluation forms and ask for questions or additional comments on what has been presented.</p> <p>Promote group discussion by encouraging audience members to help respond to questions. Use questions as an opportunity to clarify and reinforce key learning objectives.</p> <p>Wrap-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thank the audience for their attention and participation. ▪ Express appreciation to the sponsoring organization for the opportunity to speak. ▪ Remind them to leave evaluation forms. 	16



27. Neighborhood Watch

Please tell us what you think about this lesson by circling the numbers that most closely reflect your opinions.

After this lesson . . .	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a) I now know more about reasons for having a Neighborhood Watch.	1	2	3	4
b) I have a better understanding of what a Neighborhood Watch does and how to organize one.	1	2	3	4
c) I am more knowledgeable about strategies for making a Neighborhood Watch successful.	1	2	3	4
d) I now can identify key sources of information to support a Neighborhood Watch program.	1	2	3	4
About this lesson . . .				
e) The information presented was valuable.	1	2	3	4
f) The lesson was presented in a clear and understandable manner.	1	2	3	4
g) Lesson activities and discussion were helpful.	1	2	3	4
h) I would recommend this	1	2	3	4

lesson to others.				
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What was the most valuable thing you learned?

Please give one example of how you plan to use the information presented in this lesson.

How could this lesson be improved?

